REMARKS

Claims 21, 23 to 27, 51, 53 to 57 and 64 are in the application, of which Claims 21, 51 and 64 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative in a series of telephonic interviews from October 26, 2005 to October 28, 2005 during which various aspects of the claims were discussed. During the interviews, no agreement regarding the claims was reached.

Claims 21, 23 to 26, 51 to 57 and 64 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,009,439 (Shiomi) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,490,683 (Yamada). Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention generally concerns data processing involving data files having both content data and meta-data indicating characteristics of the content data. Directory meta-data is generated for a directory using common meta-data extracted from multiple kinds of meta-data from the data files. Among its many features, the present invention includes (i) directory meta-data for a directory having common meta-data from the data files, (ii) generating the directory meta-data by extracting common text data forming common meta-data from multiple kinds of meta-data included in the data files, and (iii) data files having both content data and meta-data indicating characteristics of the content data.

Referring specifically to claim language, independent Claim 21 as amended is directed to a data processing method. The method includes reading multiple kinds of meta-data from data files belonging to a directory, where each of the data files have both content data and

meta-data formed by text data to indicate characteristics of the content data, extracting common text data forming common meta-data from the multiple kinds of meta-data included in the data files read in the reading step, generating directory meta-data for the directory by using the common text data extracted in said extracting step, and attaching the directory meta-data generated in the generating step to the directory.

In contrast, Applicant respectfully submits that the applied art, neither alone nor in combination, discloses or suggests at least the features of (i) generating directory meta-data for a directory by using common text data forming common meta-data from the data files therein and attaching the directory meta-data to the directory, (ii) extracting common text data forming common meta-data from the multiple kinds of meta-data included in the data files, and (iii) reading in data files having content data and meta-data indicating characteristics of the data.

Shiomi discloses a data retrieval support apparatus which classifies plurality pieces of a retrieval result into groups and generates a group title for each group classified by the classifying unit. (See Shiomi, Abstract). In particular, Shiomi discloses that a plurality of attributes for pieces of data are arranged based on a heirarchical relation. (See Shiomi, Column 7, lines 28 to 29). A classification unit selects at least one attribute as a classification key, which is used to extract data into a group so that each piece of data in the group includes a common attribute value. (See Shiomi, Column 7, lines 29 to 37). A group title generating unit generates a group title for each group using at least one attribute value of at least one higher attribute included in common in each group. (See Shiomi, Column 7, lines 46-49).

Accordingly, Shiomi fails to disclose or suggest associating directory meta-data with a directory. Instead, in Shiomi, attributes are combined in a group title generating unit to form a title. Applicants respectfully disagree with the assertion in the Office action that the titles

of Shiomi are the same as Applicants' meta-data as the Shiomi's titles are merely concatenations of attribute names which no longer contain the same amount of information as the original attributes organized in a heirarchical relationship as in Shiomi's thesaurus.

Shiomi is also not seen to disclose or suggest generating the directory meta-data for a directory where the directory meta-data is common text data extracted from data files having both content data and meta-data formed by text data to indicate characteristics of the content data. Instead, Shiomi discloses that attributes are arranged based on heirarchical relation. (See Shiomi, Column 7, lines 28 to 29). A heirarchical data storing unit may store a thesaurus which includes higher level words and lower level words and shows the relation between the higher and lower level words as attributes. (See Shiomi, Column 2, lines 1 to 4, Column 13, lines 30 to 50). For example, the word "MEAT" would be a higher level word for "PORK, BEEF, and CHICKEN." In contrast, the present invention features extracting common text data forming common meta-data from the multiple kinds of meta-data included in the data files without the need for the intermediate thesaurus.

Finally, all of the examples given by Shiomi rely on the starting data files as being the source of the attribute data. Shiomi is entirely silent on the existence of data files which contain content data and meta-data describing the characteristics of the content data as featured in the present invention. At best, Shiomi discloses a single data file with no attached meta-data. This necessitates Shiomi's reliance on the separate stored thesaurus and classifying unit that operates on the stored data files in order to classify the data files and generate the group title. (See Shiomi, Fig. 2).

Nothing in Yamada is seen to remedy the above-noted deficiencies noted with respect to Shiomi. In particular, Yamada discloses using directories to group file data, and

attaching a directory name to each directory. That is, Yamada discloses the essentially the same process used in Shiomi to group file data. However, Yamada fails to disclose or suggest generating directory meta-data for a directory by using common text data extracted from data files having both content data and meta-data formed by text data to indicate characteristics of the content data.

Therefore, for at least the foregoing reasons, Claim 21 is believed to be in condition for allowance and Applicants respectfully request same. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 51 and 64 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons.

The remaining claims are each dependent from an amended independent claim as discussed above and are, therefore, believed allowable for the same reasons. In addition, because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration of each dependent claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

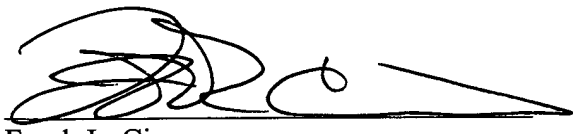
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW

Although the Applicants believe that the application is in condition for allowance, if upon consideration of this Preliminary Amendment the Examiner still has concerns as to the patentability of the claims, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact Applicants' representative to arrange an interview in order to further advance prosecution of the subject application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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